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Message Text

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43
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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R 270845Z SEP 74
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4861
INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJECT: PRIMIN TANAKA ANNOUNCES INTENT TO RESHUFFLE CABINET

SUMMARY: PRIMIN TANAKA'S DISCLOSURE TO JAPANESE PRESS IN CANADA ON EVE OF RETURN TO JAPAN OF HIS INTENTION TO MAKE SWEEPING CHANGES IN HIS CABINET THIS FALL HAS SPARKED INTENSE SPECULATION CONCERNING SCOPE AND TIMING OF RESHUFFLE. END SUMMARY.

1. SPEAKING TO REPORTERS COVERING HIS CANADIAN TRIP IN TORONTO SEPTEMBER 26 ON EVE OF HIS RETURN TO JAPAN,PRIMIN TANAKA DISCLOSED THAT HE INTENDS TO CARRY OUT "A LARGE SCALE" RESHUFFLE OF HIS CABINET AND TOP LDP EXECUTIVE POSTS. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, TANAKA SAID THAT IN PICKING HIS NEW CABINET HE WOULD NOT CONSULT FACTION LEADERS NOR ALLOW CONSIDERATIONS OF FACTIONAL BALANCE TO SHAPE HIS CHOICES. HE APPARENTLY LEFT IMPRESSION THAT UPCOMING RESHUFFLE WOULD TAKE PLACE IN LATE NOVEMBER AFTER PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT. HE ALSO REPORTEDLY INDICATED THAT HE SAW NO NEED FOR EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION IN NOVEMBER AND WOULD PREFER INSTEAD EARLY CONVENING OF REGULAR DIET SESSION AROUND DECEMBER FIRST.

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2. TANAKA'S DISCLOSURES, THOUGH GENERALLY IN CONFORMITY

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WITH WIDELY ACCEPTED SCENARIO HAVE SERVED TO STIRP UP
LIVELY SPECULATION AS TO HIS OBJECTIVES IN MAKING ANNOUNCEMENT
AT THIS TIME AND AS TO SCOPE AND ACTUAL TIMING OF THIS
RESHUFFLE. MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT TANAKA WILL USE
CABINET SHAFEUP PRIMARILY TO FURTHER CONSOLIDATE HIS POWER
POSITION IN PARTY AND AT SAME TIME TO ATTEMPT TO REFURBISH IMAGE
OF LDP IN EYES OF PUBLIC. HIS PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF HIS PLANS AT THIS
JUNCTURE IS SEEN AS AIMING AT GALVANIZING LDP AND ELICITING
REACTIONS ON WHICH TO BASE POLITICAL DECISIONS HE WILL SOON
HAVE TO MAKE. IT IS GENERALLY EXPECTED THAT TANAKA WILL CHOOSE
HIS CABINET AND PARTY EXECUTIVES FROM ALL FACTIONS
INCLUDING THOSE OF HIS INTRA-PARTY OPPONENTS, FUKUDA AND MIKI,
AND THAT HE WILL NOT LIMIT HIS CABINET CHOICES TO SENIOR
DIETMEN BUT WILL BRING IN PROMISING MIDDLE RANKERS. TANAKA'S
PUBLIC REPUDIATION OF TRADITIONAL FACTION-ORIENTED PERSONNEL
ACTION IS WIDELY VIEWED AS REFLECTING EFFORT (1) TO MEET MOUNTING
PUBLIC CRITICISM OF FACTIONAL POLITICS, (2) TO TAKE INITIATIVE
ON ISSUE OF FACTIONALISM AWAY FROM HIS OPPONENTS, AND (3) AT
SAME TIME, TO ALLOW HIM FREE HAND TO CO-OPT MEMBERS OF
RIVAL FACTIONS AND THUS UNDERCUT STRENGTH OF HIS INTRA-PARTY
OPPOSITION.

3. SPECULATION AS TO LIKELY CANDIDATES FOR POSTS IN
NEW SETUP IS RIFE BUT NECESSARILY SKETCHY AT PRESENT. PRE-
DOMINANT VIEW SO FAR IS THAT LDP SECRETARY GENERAL TOMISABURO
HASHIMOTO WILL BE REPLACED, POSSIBLY BY CHIEF CABINET
SECRETARY NIKAIDO OR NATIONAL LAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY DIRGEN
EIICHI NISHIMURA, ALTHOUGH SOME SPECULATION ENVISAGES
POSSIBILITY THAT POST WILL BE GIVEN TO TANAKA ALLIES MASAYOSHI
OHIRA OR YASUHIRO NAKASONE. AS FOR CABINET ASSIGNMENTS,
THERE ARE AS YET NO AUTHORITATIVE GUESSES AS TO LIKELY CHOICES.
IT IS BELIEVED BY SOME OBSERVERS, HOWEVER, THAT MINISTERS
NEWLY APPOINTED LAST JULY, INCLUDING FOREIGN MINISTER TOSHIO
KIMURA, ARE LIKELY TO RETAIN THEIR PORTFOLIOS.

4. ALTHOUGH PRIME MINISTER TANAKA REPORTEDLY TOLD PRESS
IN VANCOUVER SEPT 25 THAT HE PLANS RESHUFFLE IN LATE NOVEMBER
AFTER PRESIDENT FORD'S JAPAN VISIT, POSSIBILITY OF AN EARLIER
SHAKEUP IS NOT RULED OUT. SOME LDP MEMBERS AND POLITICAL
OBSERVERS BELIEVE TANAKA MAY TAKE ACTION IN PERIOD BETWEEN
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HIS RETURN FROM HIS SECOND TRIP ABROAD NOVEMBER 8 AND
BEGINNING OF PRESIDENTIAL VISIT NOVEMBER 18. OTHERS, INCLUDING
LDP POLICY BOARD CHAIRMAN AND FORMER FINANCE MINISTER MIKIO
MIZUTA, ARE ARGUING FOR AND PREDICTING EVEN EARLIER RESHUFFLE
TO TAKE PLACE BETWEEN TANAKA'S RETURN FROM CANADA AND HIS
DEPARTURE OCTOBER 28 ON HIS SECOND FOREIGN TRIP.

5. COMMENT: AMID WIDE-RANGING SPECUALTION, PRIMIN TANAKA

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IS UNLIKELY TO MAKE HASTY MOVE UNTIL HE SIZES UP POLITICAL SITUATION IN TERMS OF HIS FUTURE AS PARTY LEADER. IT SEEMS QUITE CLEAR PERSONNEL SHAKEUP WILL BE AIMED MAINLY AT ENHANCING AND CONSOLIDATING STRENGTH OF PARTY MAINSTREAM (I.E., TANAKA AND HIS PRINCIPAL ALLIES) AND AT UNDERMINING STRENGTH, UNITY AND MOMENTUM OF FUKUDA-MIKI ANTI-MAINSTREAM. ALTHOUGH RESHUFFLE IN LATE NOVEMBER WOULD APPEAR TO SUIT TANAKA STRATEGY BEST -- AND IS MOST PROBABLE TIMING IN OUR VIEW -- POSSIBILITY OF SURPRISE MOVE EARLIER THAN ANTICIPATED CANNOT BE RULED OUT. END COMMENT.
HODGSON

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